

Bill Nye's History of Comic England.

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CHAPTER I.

INVASION OF CAESAR: THE DISCOVERY OF TIN AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF BRITAIN.



Bust of Caesar.

England even before Christ, as now, was a sort of money centre, and thither came the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians for their tin.

These early Britons were suitable only to act as ancestors. Aside from that, they had no good points. They dwelt in mud huts thatched with straw. They had no currency and no ventilation—no drafts, in other words. Their boats were made of wicker-work plastered with clay. Their swords were made of tin alloyed with copper, and after a brief skirmish the entire army had to fall back and straighten its blades.

They also had short spears made with a rawhide string attached, so that the deadly weapon could be jerked back again. To spear an enemy with one of these harpoons, and then, after playing with him for an hour or so, to land him and finish him up with a tin sword constituted one of the most reliable boons peculiar to that strange people.

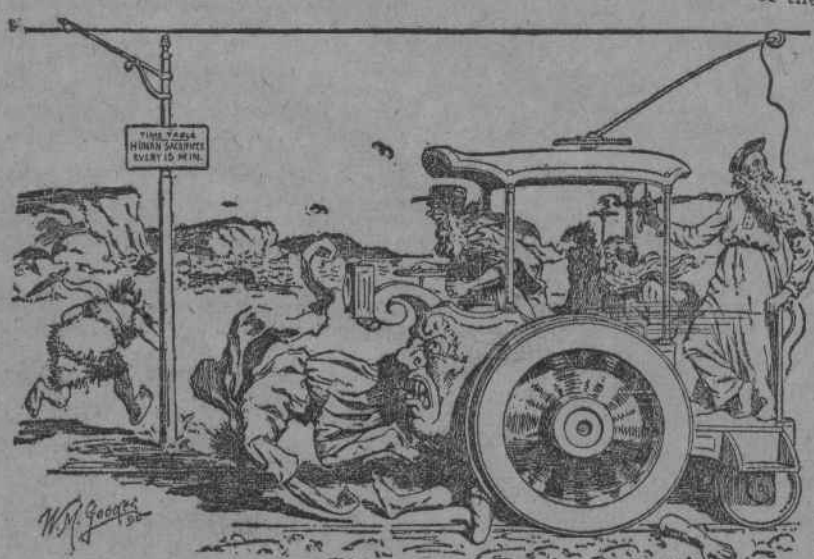
Caesar first came to Great Britain on account of a billous attack. On the way across the Channel a violent storm came up. The great Emperor and pantata believed he was drowning, so that in an instant's time everything throughout his whole lifetime recurred to him as he went down—especially his breakfast.

Purchasing a four-in-hand of dooked unicorns, and much improved in health, he returned to Rome.

Agriculture had a pretty hard start among these people, and where now the glorious fields of splendid pale and billowy oatmeal may be seen, interspersed with every kind of domestic and imported fertilizer in cunning little hillocks just bursting forth into



Agricola Encourages Agriculture.



Druid Sacrifices.

fragrance by the roadside, then the vast island was a quaking swamp or covered by impervious forests of gigantic trees, up which with coarse and shameless glee would scamper the nobility.

(Excuse the rhythm into which I may now and then drop as the plot develops.—Author.)

Caesar later on made more invasions: one of them for the purpose of returning his team and flogging a Druid with whom he had disagreed religiously on a former trip. (He had also bought his team of the Druid.)

The Druids were the sheriffs, priests, judges, chiefs of police, plumbers and justices of the peace. They practically ran the place, and no one could be a Druid who could not pass a civil service examination.

They believed in human sacrifice, and often of a bright Spring morning could have been seen going out behind the bush to sacrifice some one who disagreed with them on some religious point or other.

The Druids largely lived in the woods in Summer and in debt during the Winter. They worshipped almost everything that had been left out over night, and their motto was, "Never do anything unless you feel like it very much indeed."

Caesar was a broad man from a religious point of view, and favored bringing the Druids before the Grand Jury. For uttering such sentiments as these the Druids declared his life to be forfeit, and set one of their number to settle also with him after morning services the question as to the matter of immersion and sound money.

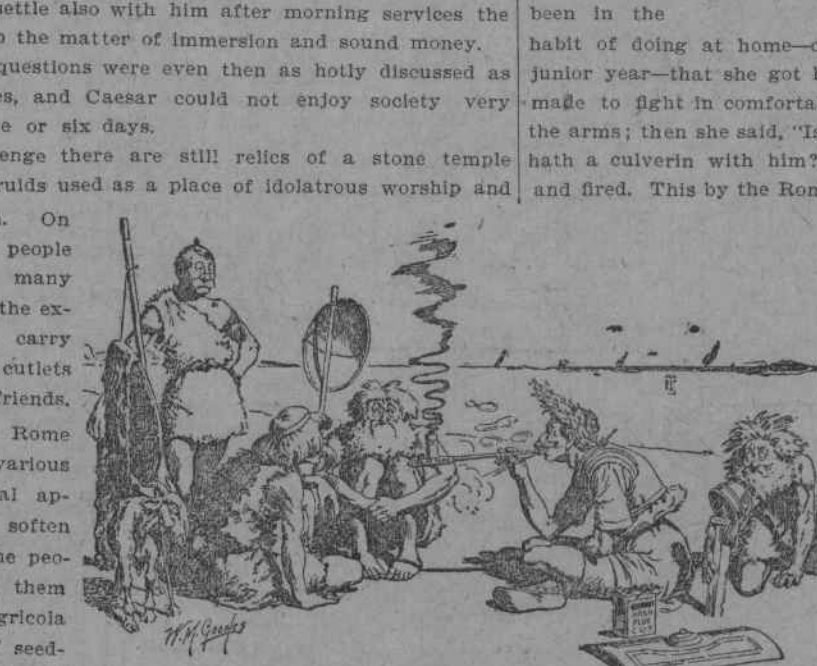
Religious questions were even then as hotly discussed as in later times, and Caesar could not enjoy society very much for five or six days.

At Stonehenge there are still relics of a stone temple which the Druids used as a place of idolatrous worship and assassination. On Glibet Day people came for many miles to see the exercises and carry home a few outlets of intimate friends.

After this Rome sent over various great Federal appointees to soften and refine the people. Among them came General Agricola with a new kind of seed-corn and kindness in his heart.



Roman Coat of Arms.



Caesar Treating with the Britons.



The Arrival of Caesar and His Army in England.

He taught the bare-footed Briton to go out to the pump every evening and bathe his chapped and soil-kissed feet and wipe them on the grass before retiring, thus introducing one of the refinements of Rome in this cold and barbaric climate.

Along about the beginning of the Christian "Erie," says an elderly Englishman, the Queen Boadicea got so disgusted with the Romans, who carried on there in England just as they had been in the habit of doing at home—cutting up like a Halloween party in its junior year—that she got her Britons together, had a steel dress made to fight in comfortably and not tight under the arms; then she said, "Is there any one here who hath a culverin with him?" One was soon found and fired. This by the Romans was regarded as an opening of hostilities.

Her fire was returned with great eagerness, and victory was won in the city of London over the Romans, who had taunted the queen several times with being seven years behind the beginning of the Christian Era in the matter of clothes. Boadicea won victories by the score, and it is said that under the besom of her wrath seventy thousand Roman warriors kissed the dust. As she

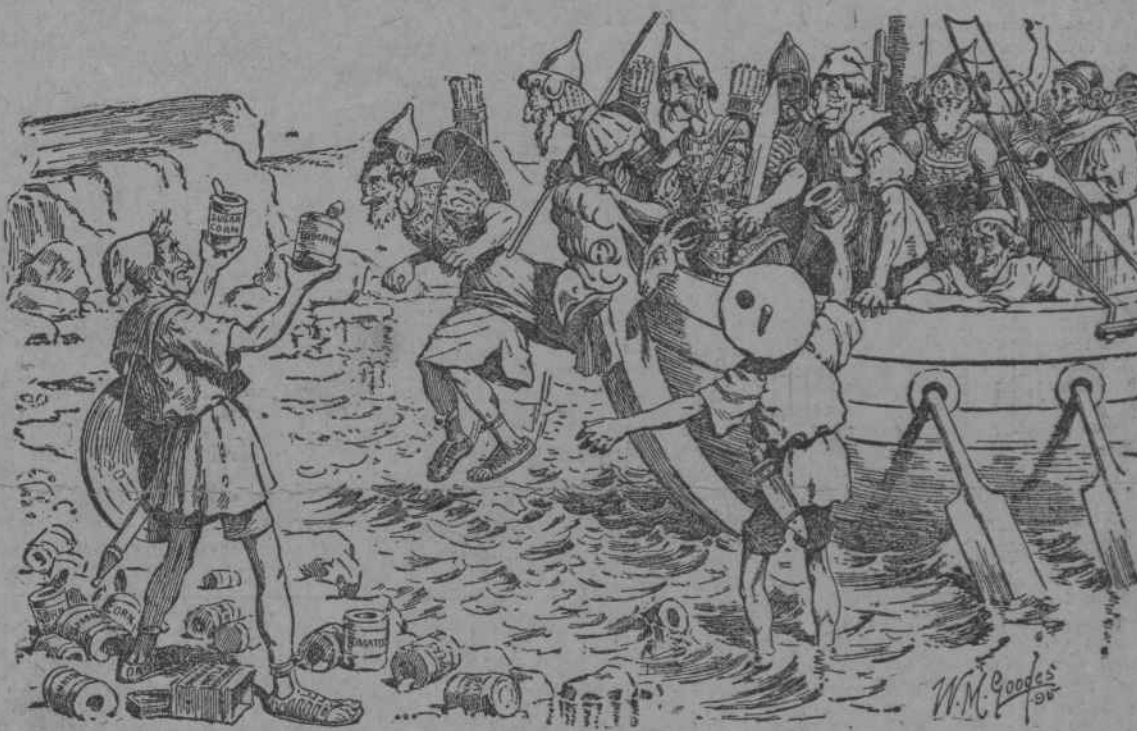
waved her sceptre in token of victory the hat-pin came out of her crown, and wildly throwing the "old hot thing" at the Roman general, she missed him and unhorsed her own chaplain.

Disgusted with war and the cooking they were having at the time, she burst into tears just on the eve of the general victory over the Romans and poisoned herself.

N. B.—Many thanks are due to the author, Mr. A. Barber, for the use of his works entitled "Half-Hours with Crowned Heads" and "Thoughts on Shaving Dead People on Whom One Has Never Called," cloth, gilt top.

I notice an error in the artist's work which will be apparent to any one of moderate intelligence, and especially to the Englishman—viz., that the tin discovered by the Phoenicians is in the form of cans, etc., formerly having contained tinned

meats, fruits, etc. This book, I fear, will be sharply criticized in England if any inaccuracy be permitted to creep in, even through the illustrations. It is disagreeable to fall out with one's artist, but the writer knows too well, and the stinging yet rankles in his soul and burns



The Discovery of Tin in Britain.

where pierced the poisoned dart of an English clergyman two years ago. The writer had spoken of Julius Caesar's invasion



Death of Boadicea.

(To Be Continued in Next Sunday's Journal)

WHAT THE RELIGIOUS PRESS SAYS ABOUT DR. MORGAN'S PLAGIARIZED SERMON.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.

"The daily papers have for the last week given much attention to the preaching on Easter Sunday by the Rev. Dr. D. Parker Morgan, of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, of a sermon not his own."

"It was a reproduction of an excellent discourse on the resurrection of Christ, by a deceased Unitarian minister, preached some eight years ago."

"The Rev. T. J. Lee, pastor of the First Reformed Church of Newark, detected the fact, and proved it by a comparison of Dr. Morgan's sermon as published in the papers of Monday with that of Dr. Putnam in the published volume of his discourses. Opinions as to the conduct of both Dr. Morgan and the Rev. Mr. Lee have been very freely expressed, with considerable censure on each."

"The most that can be said for Dr. Morgan is that he yielded to a strong temptation when overworked, which he pleads as an extenuating circumstance. As to Mr. Lee, if he offended against brotherly charity, it must be conceded some of his critics are equally guilty."

"The fact is that the publication of another man's production as one's own is an offense, the exposure of which in any other offender than a preacher would be universally commended."

"Yet, anything which weakens confidence in the ministry is to be deprecated, and in this light the whole incident is to be regretted."

FROM THE INDEPENDENT.

"Generally the clergyman who steals a sermon gives no sort of credit; in this case the offense was aggravated by a positive untruth. In the midst of a long passage quoted he gave credit to one epigrammatic sentence in it, 'As a quaint old writer has remarked.' Dr. Putnam, from whom the sermon was cribbed, was not a quaint old writer, but died less than twenty years ago, so that the utterance of untruth was added to the deception of silence."

"We are very sorry that in this case the clergyman, who has abundantly proved his ability to write his own sermons, makes no frank confession of wrong, but excuses himself on the ground of his having been too busy with Easter services to prepare a sermon of his own. In that case he might have frankly said so."

"The minister who detected the fraud by comparing the sermon as reported in the newspaper with the sermon printed in Dr. Putnam's volume has been severely blamed for not having privately rebuked his brother, and for having by this public exposure thrown suspicion on the honesty of other preachers."

"We are not convinced that such a public offense did not require a public rebuke, nor is it clear that the best way to prevent general suspicion is not to expose those who are guilty."

"In this case the amusing thing is that the sermon was originally written by a Unitarian minister, and that the best thing for Easter use by a clergyman of a denomination which emphatically shuts Unitarians outside the pulpit."

FROM THE NEW YORK OBSERVER.

"Every now and then correspondents of the newspapers convict some writers and speakers of what is termed plagiarism, which is using other people's words without credit. The latest instances are Dr. Morgan, of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, who preached a part of a sermon of the late Dr. Putnam, of Roxbury, on Easter Sunday, and Brander Matthews, who transferred a large slice of one of Washington Irving's writings to his own account, in the New York Times."

"Both gentlemen have explained these literary appropriations more or less satisfactorily to the public. Dr. Morgan might have said that his church permits the reading of homilies and sermons without reference to who wrote them, and that no clergyman of the Anglican Church need apologize for reading another man's sermon; but it was a mistake for a rector to take such a liberty in an American pulpit, especially with a Unitarian's discourse. Mr. Matthews explains that his use of Irving was all a dream; but such dreams are apt to end like this one—in a nightmare."

"Since there is nothing new under the sun, it is much simpler for writers and speakers to admit that others have said all that they can say, and that the best thing can hope to do is to modify the manner of saying things, using each his own fashion of speech, even if it is not so good as that of some other men."

FROM THE OUTLOOK.

"It would be legitimate for a tired minister to take into his pulpit another man's sermon and announce to his congregation that he would read it to them in lieu of one of his own; but to offer his fatigue as his excuse after the plagiarism has been detected indicates a moral obtuseness of perception which, we may hope, is rarely experienced, as it is rarely seen. The essence of plagiarism is dishonesty. It is a sin of vanity, sometimes commingled with intellectual laziness. The plagiarist desires applause for a service which he has not rendered, for a work which he has not wrought. Any and every attempt to pass off upon others as original what has been borrowed is dishonest."

"The whose self-respect prevents the desire to seem to be what he is not; he whose pride of character, not to say his moral principle, makes decoration in another's plumes abhorrent to him, never need fear falling into the sin of plagiarism. He who has consciously borrowed from others, who is even willing to be called greater, wiser, or better than he is, cannot take too much heed lest he fall; cannot be too careful to give public credit for the thoughts as well as the forms of expression, which he has consciously borrowed from others. And, however hard it may be to say it, it is nevertheless true that he who uses another man's thoughts as though they were his own, that he may procure an undeserved reputation by passing them off as his own, is as truly dishonest as the man who filches a purse from the pocket or a loaf of bread from the bakery, and in some respects is the worse of the two."

FROM THE CHURCHMAN.

"Ideas are in sense, the common property of all men. Of absolute originality there is so little, that in more than one instance Shakespeare and Goethe can be shown to have been plagiarists. But ideas, and the form in which they are cast, are quite distinct things. The legions have in themselves an element of universality; their form is individual."

"No one can, without acknowledgment, appropriate another's language without an essential confusion of the rights of property. No clergyman can do so without injury to his finer instincts. Whether such an act is known to others or not, its effect upon him whose it is can only be of one kind. And when it becomes known to others, its harmful influence is something not easily measured."

"And yet, how many clergymen are competent to write two original sermons, or even one a week? And if a clergyman scrupulously confines himself to reproducing, in form of his own creation, the thoughts of others, or his own, how much are they apt to be good for, for the general purposes of interest and education? It would seem as if it might be worth while to consider this question with reference to some practical result. Suppose that some three or four persons of recognized competence, discretion and literary taste and culture were asked to select and publish monthly four sermons to be licensed to be read by the clergy and to be distinctly so announced when read; would it not be an inexpressible gain and relief, not only to themselves, but to their people?"

FROM THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

"Dr. Morgan has one advantage over most persons detected in plagiarism—he does not take refuge in outright falsehood and deny that he ever saw the book. He does not affirm, after dictating it almost exclusively verbatim, that he imbibed it unconsciously, and that it came forth unknown to himself, he fancying it to be his own production."

"There are, however, some things about this rector's course which show that his moral sense is peculiar. He introduced a reference covering a single sentence in the midst of his stolen discourse, 'As a quaint old writer observes.' He knew well who the writer was; he had read the sermon through twice the night before. He knew that the author of those sermons was the late Rev. George Putnam, at one time a Unitarian minister of Roxbury, Mass. He knew that he was not a quaint old writer, but one of the best specimens of the best New England style. He knew very well that those sermons were not published until 1878."

"Consider the spectacle: A man receiving an immense salary, competing for a congregation with other men under the solemn sanctions of a divine vocation to the ministry, standing in a pulpit, delivering with all the tones, inflections, gestures and expressions of countenance matter that he knows he stole from another man, and receiving the thanks of his parishioners, as they look him in the face with tearful eyes, for his admirable presentation of the spiritual truths of the Gospel, and then saying that 'every candid man will justify him!' Nothing like this has been seen in modern times."

FROM THE CHRISTIAN WORK.

"No harm comes to Dr. Putnam's memory from the appropriation of his sermon by another. But serious loss falls upon the one committing the plagiarism—loss of self-respect, loss of reputation, loss of character, loss of influence."

"Nor is this all. Within the past thirty years some half dozen instances of sermon plagiarists have occurred in this city. We do not recall one in which the minister has not sought to justify himself, and in doing it has trespassed against the truth. This is precisely the case in the present instance. 'I dictated,' says this minister, 'the sermon, which I preached on Easter Sunday morning, after carefully reading the sermon which had been published. That was contrary to my usual custom; but I was worn out and exhausted by my labors during Holy Week, and I did not have the time to prepare an original sermon.'

"We are sorry to say the public will not believe this states the truth. It will refuse to be lured that he 'dictated' from unconscious memory whole pages of the sermon he had read, word for word, as he claims to have done. Assuredly he did not do this."

"The offense is wholly without excuse. The minister in question might and should have preached an old sermon, in the case of his inability to write a new one. Secondly, the offense having been committed, instead of seeking to justify it, the minister should have frankly said, 'Yes, it was the sermon of another; I am sorry I did not say so when the text was announced; it was a mistake to do as I did, and I am sorry for it.'"